ELECTION '88

THE RACE IS ON!

CAMPAIGN NEWS LINE COMPUTING

It's hard to imagine what today's election campaigns would be like without computers!

Most candidates use large computer data banks of citizen names to seek campaign funds. But did you know that computers can also help candidates to answer voters' questions?

At campaign headquarters, a candidate's views on different issues are put into a computer data base. When letters arrive from voters asking the candidate anything from "Do you recycle your garbage?" to "What is your foreign policy?," the candidate's staff members can search the data base to find the right answers. The information can then be included in a letter (written on a word processor!) back to the voter.

Computers are also used to poll voters and "predict" the outcomes of elections. On election night, for example, the television networks often use computers to look at voting returns from small sections of the nation, compare them to past elections, and figure out who will win the whole election.

Some people are afraid these polls and predictions discourage citizens from voting. What do you think?

Courtesy AT&T Archives

Computers at this telephone system control center keep track of national telephone polls.

FAST FACTS Election Oddities

★ Twelve candidates vied for the Presidency in 1789.

★ In the last four presidential elections, only about half of all the Americans old enough to vote actually did vote.

★ Today, the United States has two main political parties: the Republicans and the Democrats. Parties from the past have included the Constitutional Union, Populist, Anti-Mason, National Republican, Progressive, Federalist, Know-Nothings, Democratic-Republicans, American Independent, Whig, and Libertarian.

★ In 1824, all four Presidential candidates were from the same party.

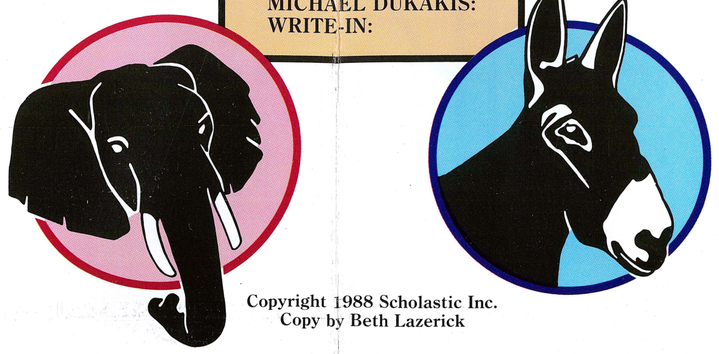
★ Starting with these Fast Facts, use your word processor and a graphics program (or a desktop publishing program like *The Newsroom*) to create an "Election Encyclopedia." Search out as many interesting, little known, and downright strange election facts as you can find to write up and illustrate for this electronic encyclopedia.

TAKE A POLL BREAK — TRY THIS

With your classmates, use a data base or survey-taking program to set up a CLASS POLL modeled after the sample record below.

As your class follows this fall's Presidential campaign, poll yourselves at least once a week. Each time you go to the computer "polling station," load the CLASS POLL file and call up a blank record. Type in the DATE and your GROUP name (either your class name or a group name from the "Voter Viewpoints" activity, below). Then type either an **X** by the name of the candidate of your choice **OR** type in the name of your "write-in" candidate. When each poll is completed, take turns sorting the data to find out which candidate won. How does your poll compare to the latest national figures.

DATE:
GROUP:
GEORGE BUSH:
MICHAEL DUKAKIS:
WRITE-IN:



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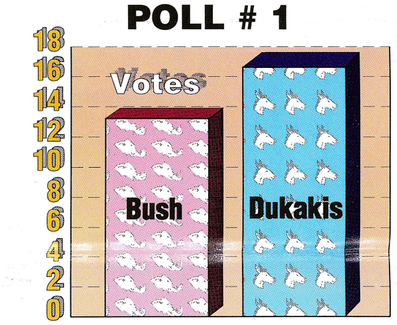
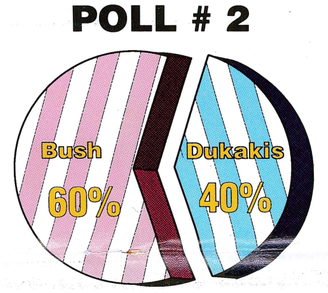
TRY THIS — GRAPH THE RETURNS

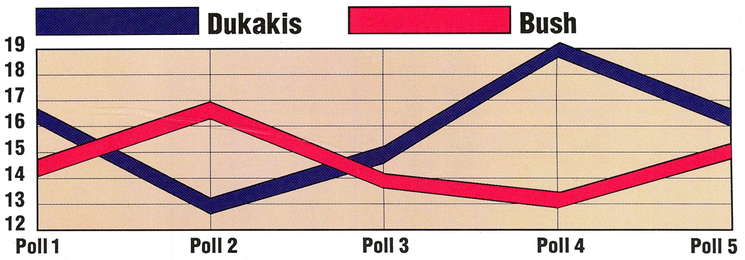
After each poll your class takes, use a graphing program to illustrate the results. Here are some things you might want to graph:

The number of votes for each candidate in each poll (bar graph).



The percentage of your total class vote each candidate won (pie graph).





The changing number of votes for each candidate from poll to poll (line graph.) You will want to use a different line for each candidate you are following.

VOTER VIEWPOINTS

Different groups of people have very different ideas about what a President should pay attention to. Using a word processor, set up at least four different files for your class: STUDENTS, SENIOR CITIZENS, COMPUTER-MAKERS, and DOCTORS, for example. Then:

1. Take turns typing a sentence or two in each file describing the issues *you* would be most concerned about as a member of that group.
2. Read your classmates' entries in each file, then decide which candidate best meets each group's concerns.
3. Use your word processor to write an editorial for each group's newsletter supporting the candidate of your choice and explaining why.
4. Conduct a CLASS POLL as members of each group.

ROLE PLAY

As Election '88 rolls on, add new groups and repeat the steps above.

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NOTES

HOW TO USE THIS LEARNING CENTER SUPER PAGE

TEACHER'S GUIDE

This issue's Learning Center Super Page is designed to spark interest in the upcoming national election, and to help students understand the ways in which computers have affected our election process. On this flipside of the Super Page are three worksheets to use in conjunction with the Super Page.

SETTING UP THE LEARNING CENTER

The Learning Center Super Page is designed for your students to interact with independently, either individually or in small groups. The Super Page and accompanying materials can form the basis of a classroom Learning Center on the elections; you should feel free to add to and expand upon them. After introducing the Super Page activities to your class (see below) and photocopying a sufficient supply of the worksheets, hang the Super Page in your computer corner or a designated area of your computer lab. The Super Page should be positioned so that it is readable by students seated at the computer.

Materials Stock the Learning Center with word processing software; a data base management program; a graphing program such as *Easy Graph* (Grolier), *MECC Graph* (MECC), or *SVE Autograph* (Society for Visual Education); (optional) a survey-taking program such as *Survey Taker* (Scholastic) or *Surveys Unlimited* (Mindscape) which includes a graphing function; a children's desktop publishing program such as *The Newsroom* (Scholastic or Springboard); a graphics/printing program such as *The Print Shop* (Broderbund); a spreadsheet program; blank, formatted data disks for student use; and, if possible, a selection of the supplementary software listed below. Also place in the Learning Center one or more almanacs, American history textbooks, and election-related magazine or newspaper articles.

You may wish to use a puzzle-making program such as *Crossword Magic* (Scott, Foresman) or *Wordzzzearch* (Mindplay) to create word puzzles for the Learning Center related to the Super Page and the 1988 election in general.

Place copies of these puzzles and your supply of worksheets in the Learning Center for students to complete as assigned, and provide plenty of blank paper for student notes.

INTRODUCING THE SUPER PAGE

The Super Page is made up of five main sections.

Campaign Computing Read through this section with your class before beginning a general discussion, and make sure students understand such terms as *campaign staff, parties, data banks,* and *polls.* The second half of this newsline report discusses how computers help project election winners, which has altered voting patterns — voters in California and Hawaii have reportedly stayed away from the polls in the late evenings because a winner has already been projected! Children should be encouraged to ask questions and share their opinions about the ideas in this section.

Election Oddities These "Fast Facts" provide children with a variety of information about elections from the past. How deeply you discuss this section depends how much American history the children know and what your instruction plans are regarding the present election. Do encourage students to seek out additional political "trivia" to add to their computer-made encyclopedia.

Take a Poll Break and **Graph the Returns** Help your students set up a data base poll or use a survey-taking program to determine how many students are for each major candidate. Your students might want to conduct several polls over the course of the next few weeks, including one or more polls reflecting the "Voter Viewpoints" activity, below. You may also want to poll other classes. Using a graphing program or the graphing function of your survey-taking software, have children illustrate the outcomes of the polls. Discuss which of the types of graphs best illustrate which kind of poll data.

Voter Viewpoints This section encourages students to think about the campaign and the candidates from different points of view. Although the activity is designed to be carried out primarily in writing, via the word processor, your may choose to have students compare their "Voter Viewpoints" verbally.

USING THE WORKSHEETS

Before using the worksheets, adapt them to meet your own needs and the skills of your class. For Worksheet Number 2, use the paper spreadsheet as a model to set up a spreadsheet template on a disk for students to experiment with.

SUPPLEMENTARY SOFTWARE

And If Re-Elected. . . for the Apple II family, $65, Focus Media, 839 Stewart Ave., Garden City, NY 11530, 800/645-8989 or 516/794-8900.

Electoral College & Primary Fight for Apple II, TRS-80 Model III and 4, $49.95, Krell Software Corp., Flower Field Bldg., No. 7, St. James, NY 11780, 516/584-7900.

Presidents for the Apple II family ($39.95) and IBM-PC ($49.95), Hartley Courseware, 133 Bridge St., P.O. Box 419, Dimondale, MI 48821, 800/247-1380.

Polls and Politics for Apple II family and IBM-PC, $39, MECC, 3490 Lexington Ave. N., St. Paul, MN 55126, 612/481-3500. ■

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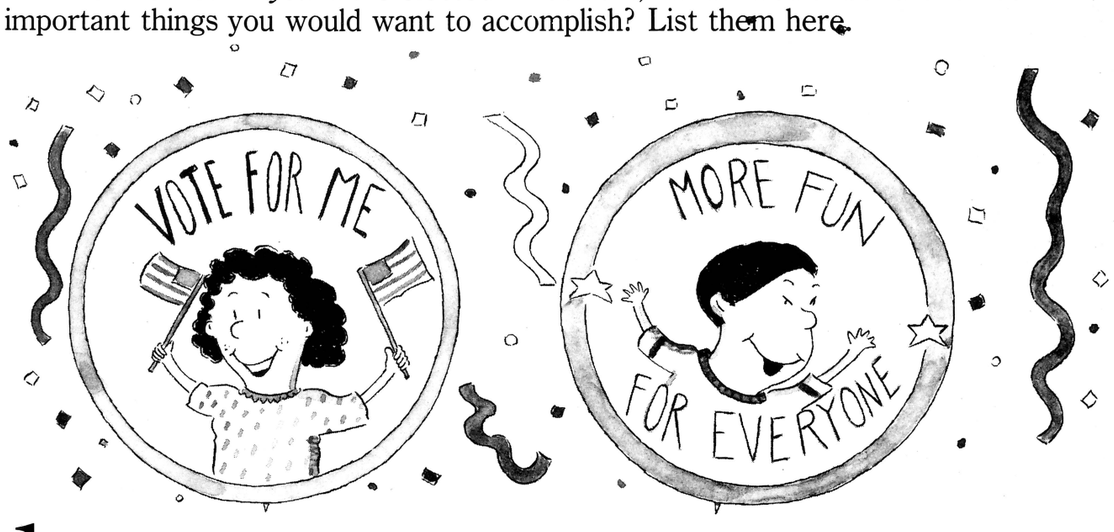
NUMBER 1

WORKSHEET TO USE WITH THIS SUPER PAGE

NAME: _____

If I Were
PRESIDENT

DIRECTIONS: If *you* were elected President, what would be the three most important things you would want to accomplish? List them here.



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Using words and pictures — on the computer or off — turn this list into a poster telling the voters what they can expect from you as President.

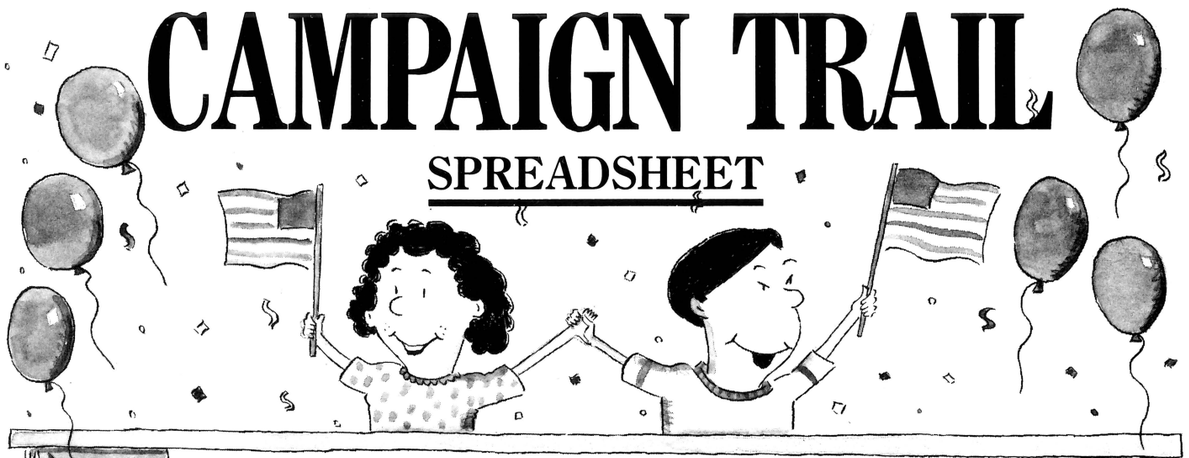
COPY

NUMBER 2

WORKSHEET TO USE WITH THIS SUPER PAGE

NAME: _____

CAMPAIGN TRAIL
SPREADSHEET



DIRECTIONS: Running for President isn't just a matter of votes — it's a matter of dollar and cents as well! Pretend that you are a candidate planning a campaign visit to Anytown, U.S.A. Use this sample spreadsheet (on or off the computer) to figure out your budget. Then figure out how much money you need to raise through campaign contributions to cover your expenses.

	A	B	C	D
1		BUDGET		
2	ITEM	PRICE	NUMBER	TOTAL
3	TV Ad	$1,000		
4	Band	200		
5	Poster	5		
6	Button	1		
7			SUBTOTAL	
8				
9		CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS		
10	TYPE	AMOUNT	NUMBER	TOTAL
11	Small-Fry	$10		
12	Mid-Size	50		
13	Big-Wigs	100		
14			SUBTOTAL	

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MIKE MORAN

COPY

NUMBER 3

WORKSHEET TO USE WITH THIS SUPER PAGE

SEND A
MESSAGE

DIRECTIONS: What issues are you most concerned about: pollution, drugs, world peace, the local park? Choose one candidate running for local or national office and write him or her a letter about what you think. Get started by filling in this outline for a business letter, then use the word processor to complete your letter.

_____
your name

_____
your address

_____
your city, state, zip code

_____
date

_____
candidate's name

_____
address

_____

_____
city, state, zip code

Dear _____**,**

(Complete this section on the word processor.)

Sincerely,

_____
your name